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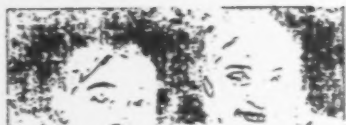
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ABSTRACT

This document highlights the exciting and creative learning opportunities offered in 16 British Columbia secondary schools. Schools and activities are: Johnston Heights Secondary School (Surrey)--parent-led staff development and multicultural activities to improve intercultural understanding; Centennial Secondary (Coquitlam)--salmon, ecology, and conservation lessons in the school's fish hatchery; Burnaby North Secondary School--largest advanced placement program in Canada and highest level of AP achievement; Quesnel Secondary School--senior course in high-tech woodworking skills; Mackenzie Secondary--practical outdoor courses in forestry management and shop courses in jewelry design and dragster construction; Cowichan Secondary (Duncan)--job training for students with severe disabilities and outstanding fine arts and automotive mechanics classes; Valemount Secondary--training in hospitality and adventure tourism in local ski resorts; Britannia Secondary School (Vancouver)--retention and achievement gains through culturally relevant outreach programs for Native teens and alternative programs for potential dropouts; Princess Margaret Secondary School (Surrey)--successful inner-city anti-violence program and extensive student support services; John Oliver Secondary School (Vancouver)--nationally honored history teacher and innovative courses in genetics and computer animation; Dover Bay Secondary School (Nanaimo)--awards for a student-built electric car and sports teams; Wellington Secondary School--national and international recognition for its music programs; Stelly's Secondary School (Saanich)--outdoor education and wilderness travel courses; Queen Charlotte Secondary School (Skidegate Reserve)--emphasis on Haida culture and language; Elgin Park Secondary School (Surrey)--innovative visual arts and culinary arts programs; and rural Lake Cowichan Secondary School (Vancouver Island)--exchanges of students, teachers, and cultures with a Japanese school. (Contains photographs.) (SV)

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Bright Secondary Schools

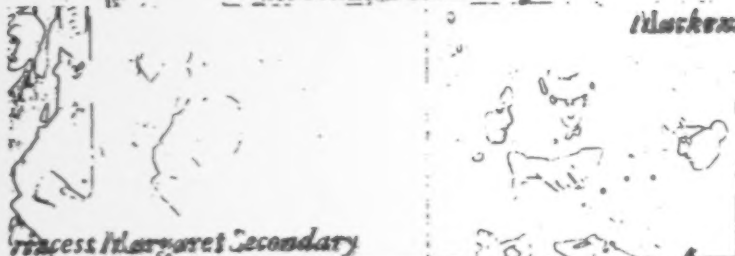


Central Secondary

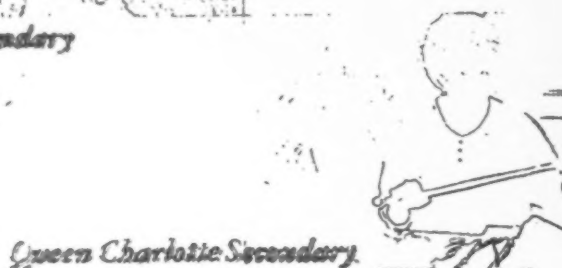


John Oliver Secondary

Markham Secondary



Princess Margaret Secondary



Queen Charlotte Secondary

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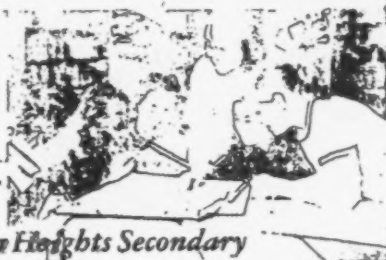
stories of success
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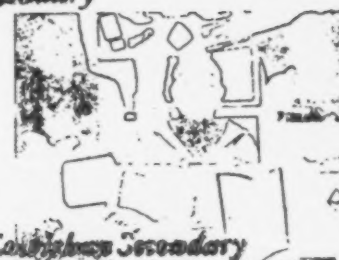
Elgin Park Secondary



Liberty Bay Secondary



Johnston Heights Secondary



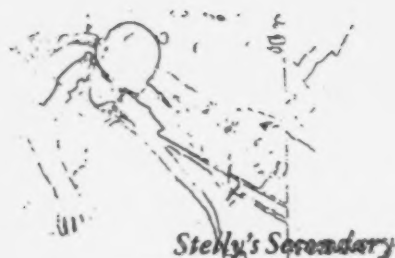
Lake Cowichan Secondary



Ministry of Education

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bright lights



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foreword

With more than 600,000 students to teach, British Columbia's public schools have a job that's as vital as it is challenging, preparing students with diverse backgrounds to assume the responsibilities of adult citizenship.

BC schools succeed – and often shine. There are many amazing successes in our province's 1,700 public schools every day. Our students meet or beat the performance of other provinces and countries in a wide range of subjects in international testing. There's always room for improvement, of course. But we should give credit where it's due.

That's what Bright Lights is all about. We want to show British Columbians some of the great things our schools are doing and profile just a few of the hundreds of thousands of excellent students, educators and schools we have.

In the pages that follow, you'll visit 16 of BC's 416 public secondary schools. And you'll discover the many ways that our schools are offering exciting learning opportunities to BC students:

Visit a school in Quesnel where students learn the basics of value-added forestry – from the forest itself, to the sawmill and the kiln, to the shop floor where students are designing and building furniture.

Visit a Coquitlam school that has its own fish hatchery which is used to help students learn about salmon, ecology and fish conservation.

Meet just a few of the province's dedicated educators, who are getting students excited about learning and making a real difference in classrooms across the province.



Students in the Outreach Program at Britannia Secondary School in Vancouver

Throughout BC, schools, parents and students are working together, bringing new and exciting ideas to our classrooms. They deserve to be recognized and celebrated.

These Bright Lights show how we can all help to make learning even better, with creative new approaches and good old-fashioned commitment. We believe that every school has something to learn from these examples, and something valuable to contribute to other schools.

These are only a handful of the many exciting things happening in BC schools. If you know of a Bright Light that deserves to be recognized, please let us know. Write to us at:

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the best of all worlds at Johnston Heights

1729 students

425 ESL students

62 non-English
home languages
in school

6 Special Ed. students

21.6% families living
below low income
cut-off line (est.)

In a school where one in four students learns English-as-a-second-language (ESL), Johnston Heights Secondary School in Surrey is making great strides in breaking down

barriers and improving cultural understanding.

A lot of this progress has to do with Nancy Demwell, the head of the school's ESL department. She recently organized a series of meetings with parents of students who speak other languages. The parents discussed their culture and how it affects the way they and their children deal with the school.

Nancy and other staff at the school then followed up with a session where parents shared their culture, concerns, and ideas with teachers. The result:

a much deeper bond between the school and many of the communities it serves.

"Parents do intercultural in-service for the staff," said Demwell. "We do a potluck, and the parents provide information to the staff about their culture. Professional days are used for this in-service and it has been very well received by staff."

Demwell is now working on similar initiatives with Indo-Canadian, Korean and Filipino families. The long-term goal is a truly inclusive Parent Advisory Council that will fully represent the mix of families whose children attend the school.

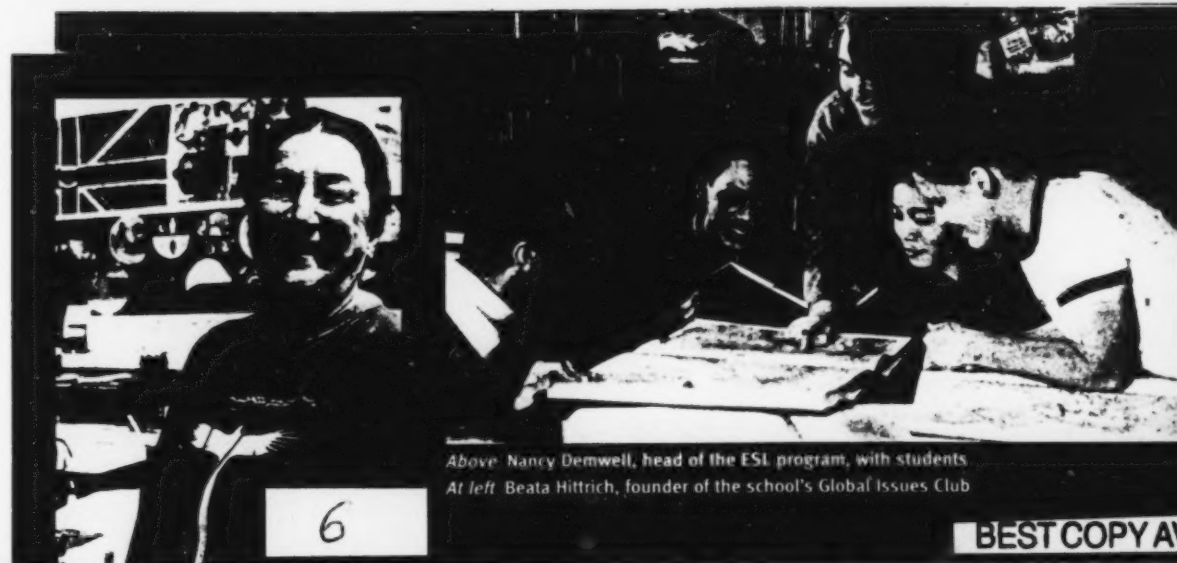
The school reaches out to students as well as parents. The ESL program uses specialists to offer clinics in particular areas where students need work. The Surrey school district also sponsors an annual multicultural

camp. Four or five students from each school attend the camp, an intensive three-day session devoted to developing leadership skills.

And the outreach doesn't stop there. The school frequently opens its doors to the whole community. Every Saturday, 500 people attend German language classes. At other times, you can find people taking Mandarin, Cantonese or Greek.

This emphasis on diversity may explain the success of the school's Global Issues Club. Founded and guided by art teacher Beata Hittrich, it has become an important voice in the community on issues ranging from human rights and multiculturalism to recycling. Each February, the club helps to run the school's Global Issues Week, with speakers and special events every day. o

③



Above: Nancy Demwell, head of the ESL program, with students
At left: Beata Hittrich, founder of the school's Global Issues Club

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hatching a great idea



2354 students

465 ESL students

41 non-English
home languages
in school

38 Special Ed. students

18.1% families living
below low income
cut-off line (est.)

Every year, Centennial Secondary in Coquitlam sends its graduates out into the world. All 115,000 of them.

The "graduates" are chum and coho

salmon fry, the results of a school project that started more than two decades ago. That's when teachers Ruth Foster and Rod MacVicar came up with an idea: a fish hatchery for the school, where students could learn about salmon, the fishery, ecology and conservation.

Together, the teachers formed the Centennial Salmon Club, and salmon eggs were hatched for the first time in 1977 in the cold waters of Mossom Creek. In 1991, the school club and members of the community built the present-day fishery building.

Today, both teachers are still team-teaching the fisheries ecology course at Centennial. It's the only program of its kind

in Canada. The award-winning hatchery brings students together with scientists performing research.

"We have the largest volunteer club in the school," said Foster. "Over 30 student volunteers are working side-by-side with volunteers from the community — from senior citizens to small children. This is a club that works throughout the school year, from September to the end of June, following the life cycle of the salmon. Some students even volunteer to work through the summer."

"Through our program, students get to work side-by-side with research scientists," added MacVicar. "We offer truly unique work experience opportunities. Students have appeared in three David Suzuki movies and one book; they have participated in a vegetation inventory on Jedediah Island; some sit on advisory boards; and currently, students are re-assembling orca and dolphin skeletons."

Centennial students learn about conservation while they help secure our salmon future

At left: Deborah Kelly and Sara Phillips

Below: Matt Romanelli, Ike Luk and instructor Ruth Foster

At right: Rufus McIntyre

Far right: Sara Phillips

Below right: Chris Calvert



Every fall, students join members of the Burrard Inlet Marine Enhancement Society. They collect eggs and sperm at the mouth of the creek, and bring them back to the hatchery. Once the eggs are fertilized, they are placed into trays throughout the winter until they hatch early in the new year. Students and volunteers feed and watch over them until early summer, when the fry — 100,000 chum and 15,000 coho — are released.

The hatchery also attracts the school's alumni, many of whom have gone on to work in related fields. Former students volunteer at the hatchery and help support



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its work. So do several corporate sponsors, including BC Hydro and BC Tel.

The hatchery isn't the only achievement making Centennial students proud. The school newspaper, *The Catalyst*, is a key part of the school's journalism course, and has won 18 Gallup Quill and Scroll awards.

Centennial students do well. Last year, 15 per cent of the school's graduates won provincial scholarships. And the school has held 43 provincial championships in 16 different sports.

Back in 1977, Mossom Creek – like many of the streams flowing

into Burrard Inlet – had completely lost its salmon population. Today, thanks to the hatchery, the salmon run isn't just thriving, it's self-sustaining.

Which means you might want to pick carefully during your next salmon meal. You could be eating an old high school chum!



Burnaby North:

excellence, discovery, charity

2357 students

262 ESL students

33 non-English
home languages
in school

123 Special Ed. students

20.6% families living
below low income
cut-off line (est.)

High standards
and high
expectations –
that's the reputation
that Burnaby North
Secondary School
has earned over
the years.

Take the school's Advanced Placement (AP) program – the largest in Canada. For the past 10 years, it has offered university-level courses in 15 subject areas for students who show promise and a willingness to work hard.

Many universities and colleges recognize AP credits as equivalent to first-year courses – which means students can go straight into second-year courses after high school graduation.

Last year, 48 Canadian students were named National AP Scholars – the highest level of achievement in the program. And six of them were from Burnaby North. This was by no means the first time; every year, the school hosts a reception for its national scholars.

This past year, two new school records were established. Nearly 200 students wrote 340 AP exams and – topping the national average of 76 per cent – an incredible 84 per cent of Burnaby North students earned a score of three or better on their exams (out of a possible 5).

The school also has an honours program, with courses in six departments.

Students have to maintain a B average throughout the year to remain in the program. Burnaby North offers over 20 honours courses for Grades 8 through 12 and nearly 20 AP courses for Grade 12 students.

Excellence doesn't mean exclusion. Burnaby North has many programs to help students. One of the most innovative examples is FLEX, which identifies students in Grades 8 and 9 who may be at risk of dropping out.

Students in the FLEX program spend a quarter of their timetable with the same teacher, which allows bonding and a greater sense of security. Students have the chance to settle into school and concentrate on learning.

Burnaby North also has a long tradition of contributing to the community. The school recently focused on collecting blankets and warm clothing for the survivors of Hurricane Mitch in Central America. And the students' "Christmas Cheer" campaign raised over \$13,000 to help Burnaby families in need.

Just as students are involved in the community, the community gets involved with the school.



One example of Burnaby North's commitment to academics: students participating in the Great Canadian Geography Challenge

Parent Advisory Council meetings can draw 80 to 100 people – a remarkable amount of parental participation.

"My son needs a challenge," said Mrs. Walsh, a Burnaby North parent. "The teachers seem to understand the kids. I like their teaching methods – it's a good atmosphere for my son."

It's a diverse population, with dozens of ethnic groups represented. Roughly half the students have a first language other than English.

That diversity comes to the fore every spring, when the school hosts its Night of Nations – an evening of performances celebrating the many cultures represented at the school. o

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Students participating in Quesnel Secondary's Innovative Wood Products Program

value-added teaching at Quesnel

936 students

6 ESL students

7 non-English home languages in school

22 Special Ed. students

12.3% families living below low income cut-off line (est.)

Many people say value-added production techniques are the keys to the future for BC's forest industry. If that's true, then those keys just might end up in the hands of students from

Quesnel Secondary School.

The school's innovative Wood Products Program has senior students lining up to learn high-tech woodworking skills in this forestry-based community. The industry-generated program, piloted in the fall of 1996, quickly became one of the school's hottest courses, with several other local high schools picking it up as well.

Using high-tech, computer-controlled equipment, including the CAD program, students produce a variety of products from bunk beds to lawn chairs. And they've had no problem finding customers for their wares.

Wood products teacher Laurie Butler can't say enough about the program's benefits. "This is the closest thing to the real world I've seen in education, as far as responsibility and earning what you work for," Butler says. "It's an amazing adventure."

Class members get involved at every stage, from finding the right tree in the forest to polishing up the value-added final product.

They identify and mark quality birch and pine trees (many donated by area parents), then go to work logging, skidding, limbing, bucking and preparing the logs to be hauled to the school shop. There, logs are scaled, milled and kiln-dried. Students also develop a

prototype of the product they will manufacture.

Completing the course gives students advance status at post-secondary institutions like UBC and BCIT.

"Traditionally students learn how to make things one project at a time. And it takes forever," Butler says. "With this system, they learn the same things through a mass production operation."

"What I've seen is the energy that comes from these students when they see the pile of products stacking up. It's 'Wow, there's a lot going on in here. And I'm a part of it.' There's a tremendous excitement and enthusiasm generated from that." •

Students design wood products using Computer Assisted Drafting (CAD)



From woodlots to checkered flags: Mackenzie

593 students

12 ESL students

5 non-English
home languages
in school

14 Special Ed. students

10.3% families living
below low income
cut-off line (est.)

Mackenzie Secondary has at least one classroom that's bigger than any other in the province. And there's no roof – unless you count the forest canopy.

The "classroom" is a 400-hectare woodlot outside the town of Mackenzie. The school owns it through its non-profit society. And for the last 10 years, Mackenzie students have been going to the woodlot classroom to learn everything about forest management from silviculture to harvesting.

8 "Forestry is looked upon by many of the students as something that's done by large companies or people they don't know, because it's such a big business," said Mackenzie teacher Ron Crosby, a winner of the prestigious Hilroy Fellowship for the development of the forestry program. "This program encourages students to interact with their environment. We teach them practical skills that can lead to direct employment but will also help in their college and university studies."

By completing the program, students can move directly into post-secondary studies in forest management. The program prepares them for a career in the new working forest – where looking after the resource is just as important as making a living from it.

Wood isn't the only resource students can learn about. There's a lot of excitement these days at Mackenzie around metal – especially precious metal.

When Martin Dugan graduated 12 years ago, nobody knew he'd be back leading a shop program that offers students fun and exciting opportunities in jewelry-making.

Yet with technical training from BCIT and a teaching degree from UBC under his belt, Dugan has spent the last four years teaching metal, automotive and mechanical courses at his old high school.

But his most popular course by far is Art Metal/Jewelry Design, offered in Grades 9 and 10. Dugan hopes to expand the program to Grade 11 next fall.

His community contacts provide generous donations of equipment and supplies for the jewelry shop. Class members work with silver, brass and sometimes gold, forging rings, link chain necklaces, art metal pieces and metal sculpture.

"A lot of students say the best part was being able to create something that someone else was able to admire," Dugan says.

His shop students have another creation to boast about, but this one's unlikely to fit around anyone's finger. It's a drag car they take to Prince George each summer for races. It was recently joined by a junior dragster, also

built and maintained by the students. Their next project: a trailer for both cars.

"The neatest thing about it is I've been able to introduce the traditional academic kids who normally wouldn't get any hands-on skills to the shop," Dugan says. "After taking this course, they turn around and sign up for mechanics, metalwork and woodwork. They realize shop courses aren't so bad." •

Mackenzie Secondary's "Outdoor Classroom" where students learn about different aspects of forestry



Teacher Martin Dugan instructs students in Art Metal/Jewelry Design

Focusing on ability at Cowichan

- 1177 students
 - o ESL students
- 10 non-English home languages in school
- 11 Special Ed. students
- 11.5% families living below low-income cut-off line (est.)

or a dozen students at Cowichan Secondary in Duncan, school is a chance to experience a world of work that might otherwise never be open to them.

The 12 students are enrolled in Cowichan's program for severely and profoundly handicapped students. The program mixes integration into mainstream classes with community programs to meet their special needs – especially opportunities at two local establishments.

The students are responsible for cleaning the lounge and stables in the therapeutic riding area at Providence Farm, located on 160 hectares of land five kilometres east of Duncan. And they train for the food services industry at the *Lunch on Clements* restaurant,

run by the Cowichan Valley Association for Community Living.

For several participants, the program has led to meaningful work. For others, it's a valuable opportunity to take part in the life of their community.

The program integrates students into mainstream classes at the school every day. It also offers projects like building garden beds for seniors, shopping for the school's home economics program, and learning about woodworking.

The special needs program is one of the initiatives that makes Cowichan Secondary one of BC's many Bright Lights. Another is the school's exceptional fine arts program.

Everywhere you go in the school, you'll see work by fine arts students, from paintings and sculptures in the hallways – to

silk banners in the windows of the office and library – to the totem, refurbished by students in the native art program, which now stands in the school's front hallway. And not only in the school, there's a mural by Cowichan students hanging at the hospital in Duncan. Another hangs in a Victoria hospital, with two more on display at the University of Victoria.

And a third outstanding feature at the school is the automotive mechanics class. In four out of the past five years, students in the class have won the province-wide BCAA/BCIT Student Auto Skills Challenge – an unheard-of feat.

"I have high expectations of my students, and they realize the goals expected of them," said automotive mechanics teacher Tom Gavigan. "Our respect for each other generates high esteem and a great sense of teamwork among the students."



Cowichan Secondary School's work experience program at Providence Farm: Mark Boersen (left), Matthew Modeste (centre) and Tina Taylor (right)

Valemount has small-town friendliness and big ideas



Provincial champions: Valemount's mountain bike team with coach Les van der Reest

10

171 students

2 ESL students

2 non-English
home languages
in school

2 Special Ed. students

14.0% families living
below low-income
cut-off line (est.)

With an enrollment of just over 170 students, Valemount

Secondary – set in a Rocky Mountain valley not far from Mount Robson Provincial Park – isn't a big school.

Not by a long shot. But that hasn't stopped it from coming up with some big ideas for building partnerships with the community – and exciting opportunities for its students.

Receiving an average winter snowfall of 180 cm, Valemount is becoming known as a premiere destination in BC for heli-skiing.

The town bills itself as BC's snowmobile capital, and a growing number of winter visitors clearly agree.

Valemount Secondary School used the growing local market to develop a new program in hospitality and adventure tourism. Working with the local adult learning centre and the business community, the school offers training in hospitality and adventure tourism outside regular school hours.

The training leads to such certificates as FoodSafe, SuperHost and Visitor Information Counselling – among many others. Although it's only in its

first year, teachers and employers expect the program will lead students directly into careers in the local hospitality industry.

For students with an interest in forest products, the innovative Touch Wood competition will be held for the second year. Sponsored by a consortium of forest companies and agencies in the BC interior, the program allows students to create imaginative new wood products and designs using donated materials.

And they do more than just design and build their product. Students have to develop a business plan for producing



Left Valemount students who competed in Touch Wood
Below Valemount's senior girls team with coach
 Tim Nusse: one-third of Valemount's girls have been
 involved in the basketball program



and marketing it. Then, at the end of the year, they attend a competitive showcase, where their products compete with those made by students from other schools. Students from Valemount have taken home third-place prizes. In 1997, they won a new 17-inch colour monitor for the school, and a power drill for each team member.

Students with a musical bent can develop their talents through the school's well-known band program. And chances are, they've started young. The school's band teacher, Sam Nelles, volunteer-teaches elementary school students.

It's a good way for them to warm up for the course he teaches in high school, where 23 of Valemount's students are in band.

Sports have always been important at Valemount, and the school's students often excel. When the school introduced mountain biking last year, the Valemount team not only held its own in competition – they won the district championship.

In a school this small, the sense of friendship and community is

strong. For students who have dropped out of school, or those who aren't able to work in a regular classroom, the school offers an alternate education program in the afternoons. The program teaches basic math, science, English and social studies. Each course is set out in manageable chunks, and students work their way back into the regular system at the Grade 11 level.

According to community leaders, police, and students in the program, it's been working wonders. For many, the alternate education program has been their first real success in the school system.

"Our alternate program is for those students in the junior grades (8, 9, and 10) with attendance and behaviour problems, who need to be in smaller classrooms with one teacher, so they can concentrate on core subjects like math and English," said Valemount principal Don Taylor. "Students then have the opportunity to return to regular Grade 11 classes."



Participants in the Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Career Preparation Program with instructors Wendy Dyson (far left) and James Gray (far right)

Britannia: *the heart of a diverse community*

991 students

489 ESL students

32 non-English home languages in school

92 Special Ed. students

37.6% families living below low income cut-off line (est.)

Think inner city, and you might think of media stories about crime and poverty. But take a look and you'll find a vibrant community with some truly bright lights – like Britannia

Secondary School, in the heart of Vancouver's east side.

The school overflows with tales of achievement and success. These stories may not make headlines. Yet they make a difference, and a big one, in the lives of Britannia students.

12

The school's focus is "retention and achievement." That means working on two fronts: keeping students in school, and helping them succeed to their full potential.

To keep students from dropping out, there's an array of programs and initiatives tailored to the many different circumstances facing students:

The Aries Project brings First Nations youth from the street and into an environment where they can develop skills and start to learn again – regardless of legal situations or behavioural problems.

The Outreach Program is a separate school facility specially designed for First Nations teens who have personal and family problems that make it difficult for them to attend the regular school system. The key to this program is respecting cultural heritage, developing life skills, and improving core academic learning.

Another initiative, 8/9/, has been running for 28 years at Britannia. It teaches courses at a Grade 8 to 10 level, and is geared to "rekindling the desire to learn". The highly-structured program has firm rules and policies, and requires 100-percent attendance. About half of 8/9/ students return to

mainstream classes, while the other half splits into other alternative programs.

The Street Front Alternative Program offers smaller class sizes and more personal attention to two dozen Grade 9 and 10 students. These are teenagers who are motivated to learn, but need help with relationship skills and personal confidence.

The Phoenix Alternative Program works with students in Grade 8 to 10 who have emotional difficulties. And the new Bridges Program helps Grade 8 students boost basic academic skills so they can keep up with their classmates.



Teacher-librarian Val Dare with students in the International Baccalaureate Program

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Outreach Program students with Ketchie Charleson, Alternate Program Worker

Keeping students in school is half of Britannia's mission. The other half is promoting achievement. Here too, the school's successes shine brightly.

Britannia offers the International Baccalaureate Program, which is recognized around the world for its emphasis on critical and creative thinking, research and writing skills, and advanced educational achievement. The program, offered in Grades 11 and 12, is serving 30 students this year.

Britannia has also launched a new Venture program, a way to offer new challenges and skills to highly-motivated Grade 8 students. Over the next two years, the school will extend the program to Grades 9 and 10 – a natural lead-in for the International Baccalaureate.

The result of this twin focus is a school with a remarkable sense of community spirit. The student population at Britannia represents 32 languages and includes students of First Nations, Vietnamese, Chinese, Hispanic, and African heritage. The teacher-librarian, Val Dare, creates multicultural events for the school and its community.

"This is my first introduction to an ESL population," said Dare. "It's a real strength of the school. Our joint library facility is incredible – it serves the community, the elementary and secondary schools, and as well, I have a discrete teaching space. And there is an abundance of resources for ESL."

The school's alumni remember their roots. A recent Class of '78 golf tournament raised \$40,000 for the school, and the group

established a \$10,000 trust fund to help students from low-income families attend university.

There's no question that Britannia faces challenges. But a combination of dedicated staff, innovative programs, and determined students is helping the school to succeed – and shine brightly. o

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Princess Margaret: a new school in more ways than one

1083 students
516 ESL students
35 non-English home languages in school
8 Special Ed. students
24.4% families living below low income cut-off line (est.)

A decade ago, Princess Margaret Secondary School in Surrey was making headlines because of student violence. But this inner-city school has turned itself around. Well

before next year's move into a new building, Princess Margaret has become a new school – and a great one.

The school's anti-violence program begins when students first enter the school. For the past four years, the local Rotary Club has helped sponsor a two-and-a-half-day camping trip for every Grade 8 class. During this trip, students learn about teamwork and cooperation, as well as peaceful ways to solve arguments.

A key step in improving the school environment was the drafting of a Charter of Student Rights and Responsibilities, a process that took two and a half

years. Today, the charter serves as a philosophical touchstone for the school, and is quoted by students and teachers alike. Every decision about the school begins with the principles laid out in the charter.

Students know they aren't alone at Princess Margaret. Thanks to an inspiring level of community support, the school's YES (Youth Education Support) program offers students a drop-in centre where they can go to be heard and get advice. The local Rotary Club and Surrey Metro Savings pay for a full-time coordinator; support staff are drawn from the support worker programs at Kwantlen College, Trinity Western University and Douglas Community College.

This year, a pilot project called the Inner City Mosaic Model added eight student teachers from Simon Fraser University, the University of British Columbia, and the University College of the Fraser Valley. They'll spend the



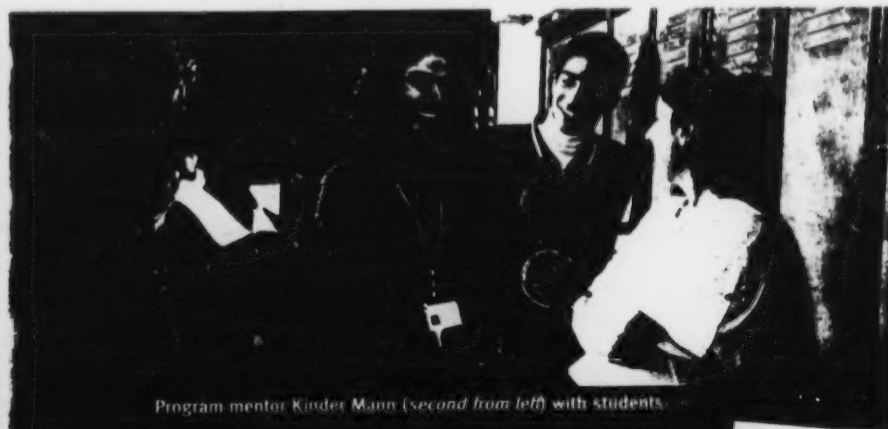
Student Anu Chadha (left) with YES program head Dale Alparaque

first term working part-time in the YES program, and the second term teaching.

"Our school's mission statement is that 'Princess Margaret is a caring and inclusive community where everyone is a learner'," said vice principal Terry Upton. "We provide many opportunities for student participation, so that our students can have a sense of ownership over issues at their school."

Princess Margaret is also working hard to accommodate the special needs of some students, using programs developed by the school district. *Career Education for the Learning Disabled* brings students, teachers and parents together to develop an individual learning plan for each student. *Building Academic Skills and Employment Skills* offers placements that teach the basics while providing valuable work experience.

Today, Princess Margaret can boast a healthy, thriving school community. Hundreds of students represent the school on basketball, soccer, volleyball and field hockey teams. And the students' cultural, athletic and academic achievements take centre stage at a rally every year – a two-hour extravaganza showcasing everything from music to sports to dance, including the Indo-Canadian culture that's central to the lives of many of the students. ●



Program mentor Kinder Mann (second from left) with students

achievement and excellence at John Oliver

1450 students
150 ESL students
60 non-English
home languages
in school
57 Special Ed. students
27.7% families living
below low income
cut-off line (est.)

Students at Vancouver's John Oliver Secondary School might have wondered once if anyone else knew just how great their history teacher is.

They don't have

to wonder any more; the whole country knows. Earlier this year, Tom Morton received the Governor General's Award for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History.

"It was really an award for both the students and me," Morton said. "The judges really enjoyed the students' work; the students showed that they had an understanding of history and that they could write well. I think the judges recognized that this was a team effort."

It's the top national honour in the field. And it's one more achievement for a school that already has an impressive list.

In the past school year, 10 John Oliver students received four-year scholarships worth \$10,000 to enable them to attend the University of British Columbia. A John Oliver student finished in the top one per cent of the country in the Fermat math competition; another finished in the top five per cent.

Academic success is not all the school has to crow about. During John Oliver's two "focus weeks", a significant number of Grade 11 and 12 students get job experience in the community that helps them plan and prepare for their intended careers.

Thanks to the school's active Genetics Club, John Oliver is now the first school in Canada to take part in the Human Genome Project. Students are doing research for UBC scientists as part of a global effort to map the human genetic sequence.

Teacher Jim McKay offers two courses that can lead to a career as an animator. And animators are in demand, if what happened to the Emily Carr School of Art graduating class last year is any indication. All of the graduating animators were hired by Disney Studios. Students choosing to take the introductory and advanced course in design communications from McKay build their own 3-D models and then animate them. Their final

project is a 10-20 second video which tells a short story.

Those who think that animators work solely in the world of cartoons should think again. McKay says the scene in the film *Titanic* where the stern is at right angles to the water and people are sliding down the deck into the ocean is an animation.

"Most of the students taking this course are bright and like computer games," McKay said. "The skills learned in this class can be used in other places as well, for example by a webmaster in designing interactive web pages or by an architect who wants to simulate a walk through a model house."

John Oliver's students represent 60 languages; 1,200 students – 83% of school enrollment – have an English-as-a-second-language background. Students say they love their teachers and their school. ●



Canada's best history teacher Tom Morton with his class

high energy learning at Dover Bay

1591 Students

11 ESL students

22 non-English
home languages
in school

33 Special Ed. students

11.6% families living
below low income
cut-off line (est.)

There's electricity in the air at Dover Bay Secondary School in Nanaimo. And some of the spark is coming from technology teacher Ken Holland.

Holland recently issued a unique challenge to his Grade 11 class. As part of their course requirements, they'd have to build a car! Not just any car – an electric car.

Holland's students rose to the challenge, and more. They designed and built it, and then they took their creation to the Electrathon Canada national competition.

It's a challenging contest, with students from 23 schools competing. To win, cars have to be light and efficient. Students have to possess ingenuity and creativity to take part in this challenge. Despite stiff competition, Dover Bay's entry won.

"The whole car is a wonderful learning tool because the students work as a team," said Holland. "The project teaches students about different aspects of design and disciplines, including aerodynamics, gearing, electronic wiring, and fabrication."

Maybe it's not surprising to find such a competitive streak. After all, Dover Bay also recently won the Outstanding School Award from the BC School Sports Association. The school fields 40 teams in 16 sports.

an education in harmony at Wellington



In tune with learning, the Wellington Secondary School Grade 9/10 jazz band

Students at Dover Bay have a strong sense of spirit. The student council involves no fewer than 50 students.

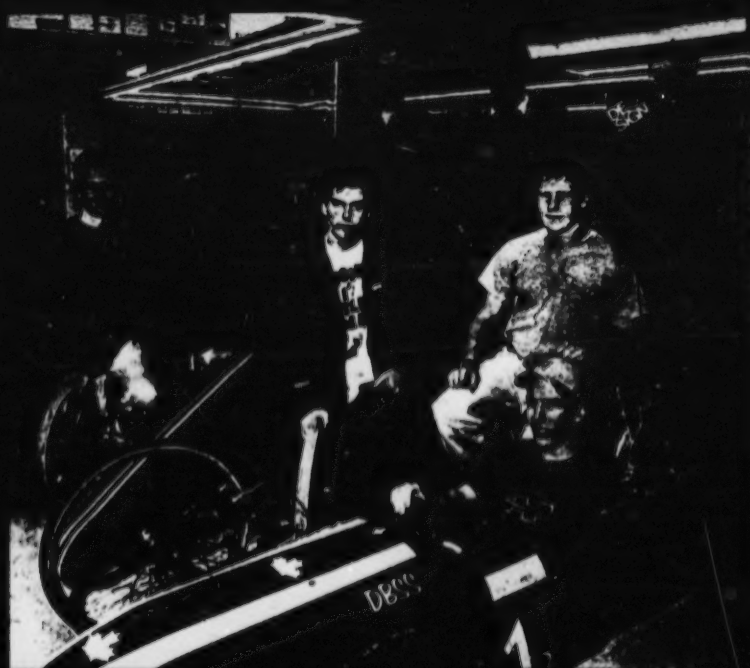
That kind of spirit translates into community involvement – and community leadership.

Dover Bay students in the stagecraft course designed and built a haunted house this Halloween in a local grocery store parking lot. More than 1,000 children and adults took the spine-tingling tour.

Four years ago, a group of students sparked the formation of a "circle group" – a safe weekly forum for young people to talk about the issues facing them

as adolescents. Parents heard about the group, and were so impressed that they have started a circle group for adults.

It certainly seems like Dover Bay energy is leaking out into the community!



Dover Bay's electric car champions, led by teacher Ken Holland

1009 students

9 ESL students

16 non-English home languages in school

20 Special Ed. students

11.8% families living below low income cut-off line (eSL)

When a student at Wellington brings a note home from the teacher... it's likely to be a musical note.

The Wellington Secondary School bands, led by teacher Carmella Luvisotto

are earning international recognition. The school has four concert bands, a junior jazz and senior jazz band, and many soloists.

Patrons at Disneyland have heard them play. So have patrons at the Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival in Idaho, where students met Nanaimo-born international jazz sensation Diana Krall. Wellington



Wellington's Grade 9 concert band, led by teacher Carmella Luvisotto (centre front)

students also received top honours as best soloists at this year's Canada MusicFest in Toronto.

"I have a really good group of parents who look after the fundraising – and we need it," said Luvisotto. "Every year we have a special trip. When we went to the Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival in Idaho, Diana Krall gave us a workshop – the kids were impressed that I knew her."

The bands make their presence felt at home, too, playing at each of the elementary schools that graduate students into Wellington. Talents of the music, choir, and drama students combine every year as the school mounts its annual musical theatre presentation. ●

students learn the ropes at Stelly's

...and the
harness, and
the chalk bags...

Adam Tuttle reaches new heights at Stelly's Secondary School with support from phys ed teacher Peter Mason



Stelly's built the gym entirely from donations. It took much determination and community commitment, but today Mason's dream is a reality.

"Part of our outdoor education and wilderness travel course, rock climbing is an activity where there's no win-lose column," said Mason. "Students just have fun, while developing life-long skills. It's opened up a whole new world of outdoor adventure for us."

That's a good thing, because Grade 12 phys ed students need lots of strength during their annual five-day trek along the gruelling West Coast Trail. And that goes double for Grade 11 students on their three-day wilderness hike up Mt. Albert Edward in Strathcona Park.

Reaching surprising heights is nothing new for Stelly's Secondary. Three years ago, staff member Lionel Sandner received the prestigious National Science Teachers Award at a ceremony in Ottawa. Late last year, staff nominated another teacher, Colleen McNamee, for the Prime Minister's Award.

Stelly's principal Bob Lee calls the school 'The People Place'. People throughout Saanich would probably agree. Every year, they meet 400 students who are

meeting their work experience requirements in local workplaces.

"Parents, seniors and kids all tell us that Stelly's is a nice place to be," said Lee. "I believe that learning is relationship based, and we work hard at establishing and developing those relationships."

Stelly's opens its doors to the community as well. After school hours, adults come by and use the climbing gym. A public restaurant – attached to the school's teaching kitchen – is open Tuesday through Thursday.

The community responds to the exciting things happening at Stelly's. Last year, their scholarship support for Stelly's grads topped \$150,000. It's clear that students aren't the only ones being inspired to new heights at Stelly's. ●

1108 students

27 ESL students

4 non-English home languages in school

26 Special Ed. students

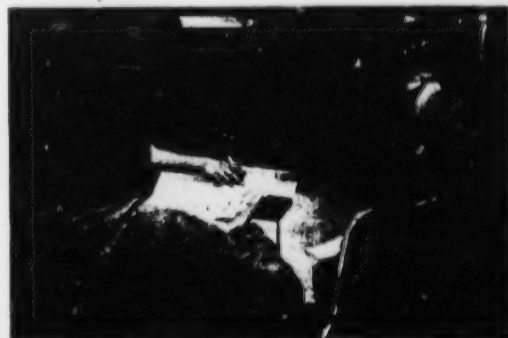
8.4% families living below low income cut-off line (est.)

Students are climbing the wall at Stelly's Secondary School in Saanich.

And the students couldn't be happier.

The school's new \$400,000 indoor

climbing gym is the brainchild of physical education teacher Peter Mason – and the result of some hard work by a multitude of volunteer canvassers.



Nominated for the prestigious Prime Minister's Award: Stelly's Secondary teacher Colleen McNamee, here with students

First Nations, new approaches: *Queen Charlotte*

426 students

6 ESL students

3 non-English home languages in school

10 Special Ed. students

8.6% families living below low income cut-off line (est.)

Later this year, students at Queen Charlotte Secondary School are going to get some elbow room – thanks to the generosity of the Skidegate Band.

Queen Charlotte shares its quarters with an elementary school; but the elementary school will soon be moving to a new building on Skidegate Reserve land donated to the Ministry of Education. The donation is a first in BC. It was soon followed by an offer of even more land for a new secondary school, an offer being considered by the school district.

Haida culture is a cornerstone of life at Queen Charlotte Secondary. The school's First Nations Art course brings local Haida artisans into the school to teach. Local artisans are clearly doing a great job.

Students in Grades 8 to 10 learn the Haida language, with another grade level being added each year. Specialized classes teach the highly specific skills that recall the history and culture of the Haida Nation: cedar weaving, bent-box construction, and fabrication of cedar paddles, to name a few. "This school really

does typify a celebration of the Haida culture," said Queen Charlotte Secondary vice principal Shirley Burtman.

The school recently made a concerted effort to reach out more to the community. This year, for the first time, every teacher went to the reserve for parent/teacher interviews. To improve communication with parents, school principal David Nickoli holds monthly meetings on the Skidegate Reserve and in Sandspit, on a nearby island.

Community feedback has meant some changes. Band members made it clear they



Three Queen Charlotte students work on preliminary sketches for Haida artwork.

want their students in school, so the school has brought in a new philosophy around discipline and suspension. The new approach includes innovations like Saturday School as an alternative to making suspended students stay at home.



Bonita Ross (left) and elder Gladys Vandal work on traditional Haida crafts.

Elgin Park — tasteful and tasty decor

1096 Students

76 ESL students

9 non-English
home languages
in school

1 Special Ed. students

6.7% families living
below low income
cut-off line (test)

Walk into Elgin Park Secondary School in Surrey, and you'll know you're in a state-of-the-art facility. TV monitors hang in every classroom and hallway,

broadcasting the news of the day. The ceilings are high and spacious; natural light fills every corner. Turn a corner and you'll find a beautifully designed and equipped, full-service... restaurant?

That's right. The school's newly developed applied culinary and visual arts program got its start just a few years ago, when a journeyman chef teamed up with the department head of visual arts. Their first joint project: a restaurant at the school.

Students worked collaboratively with visual arts instructor Daryl Mytron and helped design the interior of the restaurant, including building moveable partitions and marbling the walls. They installed the unobtrusive lighting and created the artwork that adorns the room.

Under the watchful eye of chef David Snider they started cooking and opened the doors to the *Orca*

Café. Students give careful attention to every aspect of the dining experience. Working with a table-d'hôte menu, students prepare a four-course meal, with choices within each course and a choice of times for the dining pleasure of their guests.

In the culinary arts program, every skill is addressed including food preparation, cooking, presentation, and serving. Elgin Park students create a perfect marriage of their visual and culinary arts skills.

It didn't take long for the community to realize they had a local treasure, offering fine cuisine in an elegant setting. For diners, knowing it was all created by the school's students was — sometimes literally — the icing on the cake.

The program hosts various events throughout the year in the school. Two highlights of the year are the Mother's Day Brunch and the Annual Harvest Festival. At both events the students



Visual arts instructor and maitre d' Daryl Mytron (left), and culinary arts instructor and chef David Snider (right)

decorate and present an elegant buffet for 300-500 guests. Special entertainment is provided and decorations are created to provide a visually exciting atmosphere.

The proceeds realized from these events help finance a culinary and visual arts field trip for 14 Grade 11 and 12 students in 1999; eight days in New York City, visiting the city's culinary, architectural, and cultural landmarks. •



Foreign students studying at Lake Cowichan share what they learned from the Da Vinci exhibit at Royal British Columbia Museum

hands across the water from *Lake Cowichan*

450 students

1 ESE students

2 non-English
home languages
in school

20 Special Ed. students

11.7% families living
below low income
cut-off line (est.)

Looking for an expert on Japan? Then head to Lake Cowichan Secondary School on Vancouver Island. Nestled alongside huge evergreen forests and beautiful Lake

Cowichan, the school is located in the heart of one of the island's forest communities.

The school's highly successful and respected International Program attracts approximately 20 fee-paying students annually. These foreign students appreciate the opportunity to study at Lake Cowichan Secondary School and to experience life in rural Lake Cowichan.

Ever since the town of Lake Cowichan officially "twinned" with the Japanese village of Ohtaki, the local high school has put Japan high on the curriculum.

More than 50 per cent of the school's students study Japanese some time between Grade 8 and Grade 12. Thanks to the school's Japanese language teacher, Perry Foster, and some enthusiastic students, the school has active clubs for those interested in kung fu, Japanese animation, and advanced Japanese language.

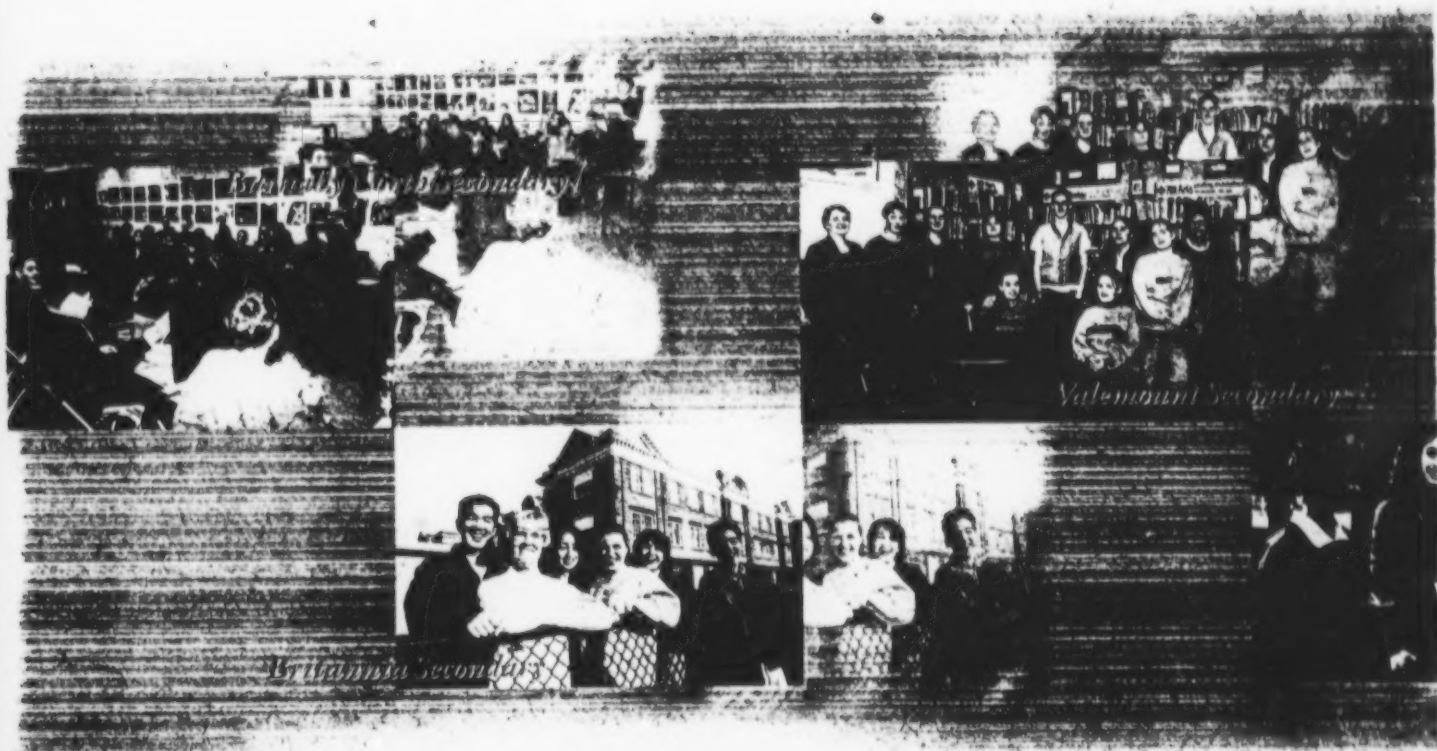
Students in this forestry town gain a valuable window into another land, people, and culture. This program is also helping students in the workplace.

Lake Cowichan grads are often sought by companies that need

employees who understand Japanese language and culture which means job opportunities in places ranging from the slopes of Whistler to Japan and other Pacific Rim countries.

The school's focus on Japan fits in perfectly with the community's friendship with Ohtaki. Every year students, teachers, parents, seniors and other residents fly to the Japanese village and stay for a while with a Japanese family and then host Japanese visitors in turn.

It's an enriching experience for everyone involved, and part of what makes this school special. For students, especially, it's a chance to learn valuable skills, broaden their horizons, and make new friends.



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